



EQUITY NEWS

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The focus of this edition of our Equity newsletter is homelessness.

According to census data released in March, WA has the highest proportion of rough sleepers in the country. The number has more than doubled from 1,083 in 2016 to 2,315 in 2021. Overall, homelessness in WA has increased by 8.6 per cent in the five years between the 2016 and 2021 census. The situation has become so serious, that the Department of Communities has established an Office of Homelessness.

People who are homeless may have reduced access to resources and can experience social exclusion and discrimination. This is particularly true for migrant and refugee populations in Australia who often lack resources and support when entering the country and many of whom may have experienced a range of challenges before and during their migration journey. For members of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) communities, apart from personal factors such as mental and emotional health problems; family and domestic violence; and recovery from traumatic events before migration, there are structural factors that act together to produce social vulnerability: being born in a non-Anglo/Celtic country; speaking a language other than English, and/or not speaking English well; and recency of arrival in Australia (within the last 5 years).

Additionally, the lack of social support networks, discrimination, and insufficient knowledge of available services compound the difficulties experienced by CaLD communities. Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia (ECCWA) is committed to supporting all such individuals. There are services in Perth, both public and private that support the homeless and make a huge difference to the vulnerable in our community. But there is need for more.

The current housing crisis in metropolitan and in regional areas is impacting even those who until now had not faced homelessness before in their lives. People with money and not suffering from any of the risk factors for homelessness, such as mental ill-health, or family violence, but who suddenly find themselves facing the prospect of homelessness simply because they just cannot find a house to rent or buy. This adds to the enormity of the problem facing the people in our CaLD communities.

The articles in this edition of the newsletter outline the difficulties for homeless people in diverse communities, but we also highlight some initiatives that have been taken by individuals to provide much needed support. ECCWA works to build a community that supports and uplifts all its residents, regardless of their ethnic or migrant status. Through collaboration, empathy, and a commitment to social equity, we can work towards ending homelessness within these marginalised communities and building a more inclusive and compassionate society for all.

Mamta Kochhar

Acting President/Senior Vice President

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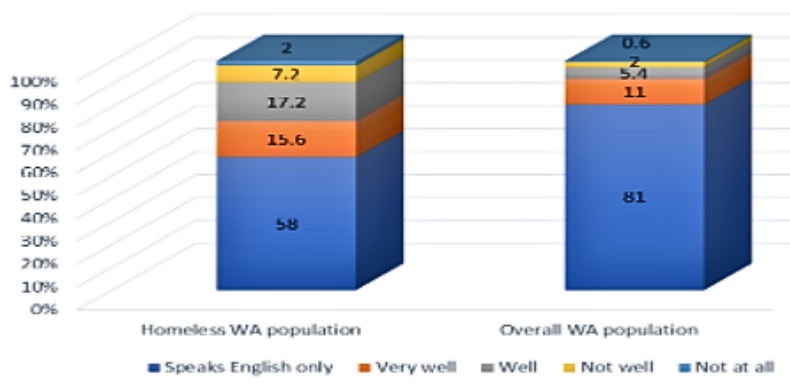
HOMELESSNESS

IN CaLD COMMUNITIES

WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines homelessness as possessing no, or inadequate accommodation; no tenure or a very short tenure; and that this accommodation is not within their abilities of control. This incorporates forms of semi-permanent housing such as boarding houses and 'severely overcrowded' living spaces that significantly impact upon the quality of physical and psychological health an individual experiences

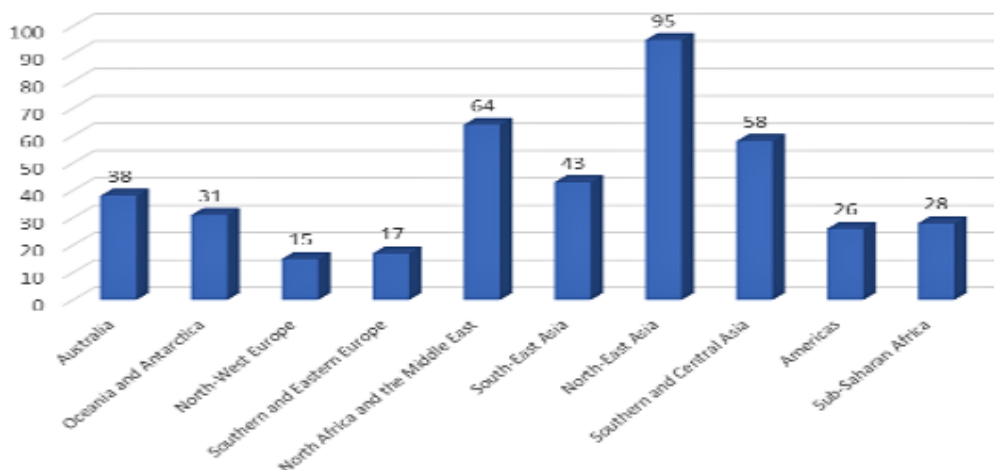
English Diversity and Proficiency of WA homeless population



HOMELESSNESS IN CaLD COMMUNITIES

Homelessness for CaLD community members, per 10,000 people in the WA population, is higher than the state average (40 per 10,000) - for South-East Asian (43 per 10,000); Southern and Central Asian (58 per 10,000); North African and Middle Eastern (64 per 10,000); and North-East Asian (95 per 10,000).

Language proficiency and confidence in speaking English is also a factor in homelessness in CaLD populations.



RISK FACTORS OF HOMELESSNESS

There are two main risk factors for homelessness - **individual** and **structural**.

No ethnic groups are exempt from rates of psychological disorders, substance abuse, or family and domestic violence (FDV).

Individual factors include personal traumas suffered through experiences of psychological disorders, substance abuse or torture; and FDV – which can force survivors to flee into homelessness.

Structural factors can lead to marginalisation, and hence unemployment due to language barriers; disadvantage due to institutionalised racism within hiring processes; and the nonacceptance of overseas qualifications.

Individual Drivers	Structural Drivers
Difficult life transitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fleeing for torture, trauma, war, violence Adjusting to new country, language culture 	Temporary visa status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to access income support, some services May be ineligible to work
Family breakdown affecting youth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconfiguration of families Tension and conflict due to cultural dislocation Effect on youth is more profound 	Access to employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties obtaining employment Qualifications may not be valid in Australia Discrimination and labour market disadvantage
Mental and emotional health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trauma and recovery from torture Post-traumatic stress disorder Mental illness, substance use and dual diagnosis 	Access to resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial stress and poverty Income support and welfare services
Family and domestic violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unaware of domestic violence services, refuges or housing options Lack of support network to escape violence Dependent/partner visas may exacerbate vulnerability 	Access to services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary health care (physical, mental health) Employment and training services Aged care services Legal services Specialist homelessness services
	Access to housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligibility for public and community housing Housing supply and affordability issues Problems accessing private rental accommodation Housing stress

RISK FACTORS OF HOMELESSNESS

Individual

Family and domestic violence

Research indicates that women from multicultural communities who experience family and domestic violence are less likely to access support services and more inclined to stay in their homes. Their reluctance to seek help can stem from a lack of knowledge about family and domestic violence services, as well as unfamiliarity with Australian laws.

While women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds may not always end up on the streets, their limited access to safe housing options often keeps them in violent situations. This, in turn, leaves them largely 'hidden' from our measures of vulnerability or need.

Structural

Invisibility in the housing market, in employment opportunities, in language hesitation, in visa uncertainty

Consistently, research also shows that people from the African and Pacific regions experience homelessness at relatively high rates when compared to other groups across different types of homelessness in WA. This suggests the need for more targeted homelessness prevention strategies and services for these groups.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

WA has introduced the WA Housing Strategy 2020-2030, aiming to connect over 150,000 households to a home by 2030 and increasing the number of social houses in WA by 6%, adding 2,600 to the 42,932 social houses already present in WA. It also includes The Affordable Housing Action Plan 2017-2020, which was successful in meeting its target goal of creating 35,000 houses – even creating 1,662 more houses than its original goal.

There is, however, some disquiet that CaLD people seem to be missing out on these houses.



Issues facing CaLD populations

Resettlement challenges for CaLD populations

Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities often demonstrate remarkable resilience. However, the road to resettlement for these communities often has its challenges, some of which are distinctively severe and extend far beyond common obstacles.

The trauma of conflict, torture, or the stressful journey of migration can leave deep psychological scars. In fact, research shows that members of CaLD communities are twice as likely to grapple with post-traumatic stress disorder and related mental health issues compared to Australian-born residents.

Culture shock, the reality of adapting to a society with different norms and social structures, can add to the strain. Moreover, arranging the basic necessities of life, such as secure housing, healthcare, schooling, and other essential services, can often prove to be a daunting task.

Such pressures can sometimes lead to uncharacteristic behaviors, even escalating to instances of violence. The stigma associated with these experiences often inhibits individuals from seeking much-needed help. This, compounded by fear of ostracisation and discomfort discussing personal ordeals, can deter individuals from reaching out to support services. These barriers, unfortunately, may result in individuals having to leave their homes without a clear plan or destination.

While these challenges are very real, it's crucial to remember that help is available and that seeking assistance is a sign of strength, not weakness. If you know someone grappling with these issues, consider guiding them towards the available resources. Let them know there's no stigma, no judgement - only understanding, support, and a community ready to help.

To aid in this journey, the next page provides a comprehensive flyer on homelessness, housing, and support services specifically tailored for our CaLD communities. This valuable tool can serve as a first step towards navigating the available support and creating a safe, secure future for every individual in our diverse society. Remember, your presence can make all the difference...

HOMELESSNESS HOUSING & SUPPORT SERVICES

Entrypoint Perth provides a free assessment and referral service assisting people who are experiencing homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless in Western Australia to access accommodation and support options.

1800 124 684

RUAH centre support provides a safe space for adults over 20 years who are experiencing homelessness to rest, refresh and access specialist support services. They help with:

- Assertive advocacy
- Crisis accommodation referrals
- Document support, assistance with accessing ID and housing applications
- Support with referral to case management programs, health services, legal services and other supports
- Rest and recuperation facilities including showers.

Drop in between 8.30am and 2.00pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at
Address: 247 James Street, Northbridge .

Family and Domestic Violence

- **Family and Domestic Violence statistics**

- 1 in 6 women have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner, while for men it is 1 in 16.
- 75% of victims of domestic violence reported the perpetrator as male, while 25% reported the perpetrator as female.²
- Overall, 1 in 5 women and 1 in 20 men have experienced sexual violence.
- On average, one woman every nine days and one man every month is killed by a current or former partner.
- **Family and Domestic violence is a leading cause for homelessness:** In 2021-22 domestic violence was the main reason why more than 72,900 people asked for help from specialist homelessness services.⁵
- 39% (or 108,000) of people seeking help from specialist homelessness services in 2021-22 had experienced domestic and family violence.⁶

How can we help? What can we do?

We know that many people in our communities already provide individual support for family members and friends who are homeless. But there are other things that can be done to help homeless people in the wider community.

We have included two examples of services created by ordinary individuals in our community to support homeless people in small ways.



ORANGE
SKY

Orange Sky Australia is the world's first free mobile laundry service for people experiencing homelessness – an idea founded in a Brisbane garage by two 20-year-old mates, Nic Marchesi and Lucas Patchett. In late 2014, the boys installed a couple of washing machines and dryers in the back of their old van and visited parks around Brisbane to wash and dry clothes for free. What started as an idea to improve hygiene standards and restore dignity to people doing it tough has evolved into something much bigger and more powerful.

It is run by volunteers, who provide an environment for every day Australians to access regular laundry and shower services. They focus on creating a safe, positive and supportive place for people who are too often ignored or who feel disconnected from the community. Their volunteers are not social workers or experts on homelessness – they are empathetic listeners and great conversationalists.

Orange Sky currently has two vans in Perth, providing clean clothes, safe warm showers and regular connection to people doing it tough.



Community news

HANGING BY A THREAD



Western Australian mosaic artists took part in the ‘Hanging by a Thread’ Mosaics project for Afghan Women. The project is designed to draw attention to the plight of Afghan women and girls under the Taliban and was initiated in Tunisia and Canada as part of the United Nations International Year of Glass 2022. The art piece represents the struggles faced by women in Afghanistan and was crafted in various locations worldwide, including Australia. The Amherst Library will now permanently showcase this artwork.

AUSTRALIAN REFERENDUM 2023

Did you know there is a referendum this year? The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) has a range of translated resources available via the AEC website, including fact sheets in 34 languages covering: how to vote in a referendum, general referendum information, and disinformation (tips to stop and consider the source of communications).

To access this information, visit

https://www.aec.gov.au/Voting/How_to_vote/practice/practice-referendum.htm



In 2023, Australian citizens will be asked if there should be constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The proposed referendum question is: “A Proposed Law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?”

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